

CIA HISTORICAL REVIEW PROGRAM
RELEASE IN FULL

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2003
EYES ONLY

15 April 1954

MEMORANDUM FOR: Mr. Henry Loomis
Special Assistant to the Director
United States Information Agency
Washington, D. C.

SUBJECT: Attempted coup in Nicaragua; possible involvement of Guatemalan Government.

1. I have just noted your news policy note dated April 9, subject: Disorders in Nicaragua. This note provides as follows: "Media requested to give minimum treatment without comment to reports persons implicated in plot against Nicaraguan president have been given sanctuary in Guatemalan embassy in Managua." If this was prepared on the basis of our recent discussion of this development, I should like to point out that the note could possibly be misleading to the recipients and suggest the addition of certain refinements.

2. It is my recollection that I explained to you what I understood the State Department to have in mind as regards this incident somewhat as follows: The attempted coup against Somoza's regime and more especially the indications thus far received of Guatemalan governmental involvement, afford what appears at the moment to be an extremely important opportunity to "indict" the Guatemalan regime under the OAS anti-Communist resolution. However, investigation is by no means complete and it is important that for the moment the incident not be over-played and not be the subject of interpretation and interpolation by our overt media. The reasons for this are, in the order of their importance:

a. The necessity to avoid assumptions or conclusions in our overt propaganda which could be disproved by the Guatemalans, thereby casting discredit upon the entire "story" of their involvement and intervention.

b. The desirability of refraining from a premature play of this incident since this could have the effect of dissipating the impact of a subsequent official charge against Guatemala.

3. Accordingly, it would be my recommendation that the attempted coup, and particularly incidents related thereto which appear to involve

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Guatemala, be played as straight news and without too heavy emphasis pending the decision of the State Department (which will be based upon such firm evidence as we are seeking to develop) as to whether Guatemala has committed an indictable offense in this regard.

FRANK G. WISNER
Deputy Director (Plans)

cc: DCI
C/WH
DC/PP ✓

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